

The Brethren Evangelist.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

S. J. HARRISON,
S. H. BashorEditor
Vice Editor.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

J. M. Tombaugh I. D. Bowman
C. Forney.

NOTICE.

Address all mail matter and make all remittances payable to The Brethren Evangelist, Ashland, Ohio.

VALEDICTORY.

When we left the *Brethren at Work*, January, 1880, we thought we had all the publishing business we would want the remainder of our life. We never had our satisfaction so fully supplied in anything we engaged as that of editing a religious paper under the conditions then existing. Even yet we have a distinct remembrance of the sensations which sometimes thrilled but oftener chilled us during those days of history making. To satisfy the patrons it was necessary to withhold much of the truth which in our opinion they most needed and to give great prominence to "distinctive features," which has nothing in their favor save it was "the order of the brethren."

To foist one's self upon a people because he has money, or because he has friends in a position to place him there, without the knowledge or consent of those served, is harmful to the man who takes the position and to the people whom he serves.

But as church matters were then, there was no editor who held his place because the church had expressed a desire to have him in that position. For downright selfishness we do not remember ever having seen a better illustration than the columns of the four leading papers then running.

We soon discovered the almost illimitable power of a paper in molding sentiment and character. No difference how much influence the elders of any state had, the influence of the editor was greater than that of all them combined. It was no wonder that his work was viewed critically and suspiciously. And while these opportunities were great the responsibility kept full apace with them so that the evil which we did not do that we could have done we were not infrequently blamed for doing. On the whole our position in that capacity was such a vexatious one that we hope never to be compelled to repeat the experience.

When the question of the Brethren church owning and controlling its own literature was presented to us by a certain party with

the question of who could take it up as a successor to Brother Holsinger, and as to whether the present incumbent could or would undertake it, we stated distinctly that under no circumstances would we take the position except the church should by practical unanimity call us to the place. This is the full extent of our effort to obtain the place. To no one else did we even say we would accept it if it were offered. We did not ask to have the place, and we did not ask to be relieved of it. The responsibility of our taking up and of our laying down the editorial pen of the EVANGELIST rests entirely with the National Conference.

We are satisfied with our work in but one respect. We did the best we could. When we took charge of the office we had a great many embarrassments. The office was in debt; half the stock or more than half, was in the hands of private parties. Some of these were not a little indignant that the Conference without consulting them should utterly and wholly set aside and ignore their rightful and legal authority and appoint an editor, a power which was vested in the directors of the stock company alone, without their knowledge or consent. We therefore felt the responsibility of raising the funds necessary to lift all the stock that we could not get donated and to pay off the indebtedness of the office rested upon us personally.

At first we thought we would stay out in the field and canvass all of the churches in order to raise the amount necessary to do this but we were met at every point with the statement that we had been chosen editor, and that the thing for us to do was to take charge of the office, and when they saw the transfer had been really made they would respond freely and properly. After one month's experience of this kind we yielded to the demand and returned to the office and took up the work. We found ourselves at once overwhelmed with editorial and business perplexities, and were obliged to confine ourselves to the office. The funds were not sufficient to permit us to employ help in our place and all our efforts to get some one else to canvass state districts were futile. The Illiokota and Kanemorado districts and one-half of the Indiana district alone were properly canvassed. Had the entire brotherhood been personally solicited at the same time with the same result the Publishing House would have been lifted out of debt and had funds to purchase material necessary to make it a first-class printing establishment.

This was an objective point with us, and we hoped to remain in the office until we had accomplished this for one thing. Owing to the very friendly relations and financial assistance of the managing board, we were en-

abled to carry on the business of the office without financial embarrassment. The first year we had the adjusting of the business management to a basis where it would be possible to carry on the work of the Publishing House within its income. Originally it was not intended by the Conference that the editor should in any way have financial responsibilities, but it was soon found out that it was impossible to employ a business manager and an editor with the income at our command.

When we began the editorial work on the paper there was no system of obtaining church reports. Only when some one felt like it did we hear from the churches. A few felt like it rather often but the great majority kept their work buried within their own congregations.

"Why should the wonders God hath wrought,
Be lost in silence and forgot,"

kept ringing in our ears until we set about making a systematic effort to obtain an authorized correspondent from each congregation who would report its doings *regularly*. However, the work as yet has been only fairly begun. We had hoped in the coming year to reach something like thoroughness in this department of the paper.

We were very much disappointed on doctrinal lines. We asked the help of those best known in the church as able writers on doctrine to contribute to its columns, and obtained from most of them large promises which for the most part are yet unfulfilled.

Contributors found it much easier to promise than to fulfill. This we have been assured was not through any lack of interest, or a disposition to shirk duty, but in the estimation of those who made the promises, a lack of time and opportunity. Had we known that these contributors would not supply us with the matter asked for we should have made more effort in that direction ourselves.

In starting out with the paper we resolved to leave the work which was assigned by Conference to committees absolutely in their hands. We did not allow those who were unfavorable to the committee or its work to interfere or obstruct it through the paper. We felt that any suggestions or criticisms intended for said committees or their work should be sent direct to the committees, that they should have the privilege of answering in the same number of the paper the criticisms, questions or objections filed on, to or against them. As a result of this we have enjoyed almost perfect harmony. The Brotherhood to-day is thoroughly united because brethren have not been contending and sowing seeds of discord through the columns of our paper. Being the church organ it should be the exponent of the rightful author-